



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/618,249	07/11/2003	Francis B. Brake JR.	47004.000251	4607
7590 05/12/2008				
Thomas J. Scott, Jr. Hunton & Williams, Patent Dept. Suite 1200 1900 K Street Washington, DC 20006-1109				
EXAMINER				
MILET, ELDA G				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3692				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
05/12/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/618,249

Applicant(s)

BRAKE ET AL.

Examiner

Elda Milef

Art Unit

3692

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 February 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 35-59, 68 and 69 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 35-59, 68 and 69 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. This office action is in response to the amendments submitted by the applicants on 2/6/2008.

- Claims 2-34, 60-67 are cancelled.
- Claims 1, 35, 49 are amended.
- Claims 68, 69 are new.
- Claims 1, 35-59, 68-69 are pending in the application.

Claim Objections

2. Applicant is advised that should claim 41 be found allowable, claim 68 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Double Patenting

3. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

4. Claims 1, 35-59, 68-69 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,865,547 B1. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both sets of claims speak to methods for customer activation of a multi-vale card having a primary feature and one or more optional secondary

features with sub-claims supporting the multi-value card activation process.

5. Claims 1, 35-59, 68-69 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-16 of U.S. Patent No. 6,032,136. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both sets of claims speak to methods for customer activation of a multi-value card having a primary feature and one or more optional secondary features with sub-claims supporting the multi-value card activation process.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability

shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1 and 35-59, 68-69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cunningham (US Pat 6,014,645) in view of "Visa, MBNA and De La Rue Launch Multi-Function Smart Card Program," De La Rue Pic 7/06/1998 (hereinafter De La Rue) in further vies of Dorf (US Pat 6,000,608).

Re Claim 1: Cunningham discloses a method using a computer system for a real time customer activation of a value card having a primary feature wherein the system automatically processes a customer's activation of the value card (Column 2, lines 9-29), said system including a data entry processing center, a workstation, a graphical user interface, and a data storing means (SEE FIG 1) comprising the steps of:

- Receiving said customer's request into said system (Column 2, lines 15- 19)
- Providing at least one or more safety features to determine whether said customer is the person whose name is printed on said transaction card (Column 3, lines 23-26)

- Activating the transaction card by confirming the customers desire to "activate the primary value card use (Column 4 line 65-Column 5 line 5)

- Wherein prior to the activation of the primary feature or any secondary features, the multi-value card contains or is associated with information related to the primary feature and the one or more optional secondary features (Abstract 'The applicant peruses the offers and chooses one that meets his or her needs." Perusing information associated with the primary card offer.)

Cunningham does not explicitly disclose the steps

- Wherein the value card is a multi-value card having a primary feature and at least one secondary feature; and

Wherein the steps of offering the options of activating the transaction card by

- Determining the customer's election to add a secondary credit card feature; and

- Identifying the customer's request to activate any additional features;

AND

- Storing information related to each feature on the multi-value card in a machine-readable format.

wherein an application for the multi-value card is

processed as part of integrated application process whereby the primary multi-value card use, the secondary credit card feature and any additional use features are established in response to a single customer application and wherein the primary multi-value card use the secondary credit card feature and any additional use features are associated with the multi-value card with each feature capable of being activated after issuance.

De La Rue discloses a Visa smart card that will place the functions of several traditional bankcards onto a single microchip (single card; machine readable format). These additional features include a credit feature, a stored cash feature and a rewards program. De La Rue further includes the step of determining the customer's election to add a secondary credit card feature; and identifying the customer's request to activate any additional features in the discussion of allowing up to nine different reward programs on the smart card. Specifically noted is that the applications of such programs can be changed to target different cardholders (Page 1; paragraph 3). Furthermore, it is obvious from the teachings of De La Rue that all of the functions on the bankcard will be in effect once the card is activated because the purpose of the smart cards is to offer customers a combination of features on the cards rather than opt for single feature cards i.e., standard credit cards.

De La Rue further teaches "Advanced smart cards promise merchants and issuers tremendous marketing and customer retention opportunities and offer consumers a new level of convenience and financial flexibility."--see p. 2 para. 3. It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include the teachings of De La Rue to the disclosure of Cunningham to create a real time credit card application system and method that would include a multifunction credit card. Cunningham is concerned with locating offers for financial cards for customers. De La Rue discloses a type of financial card with multiple features. Therefore a person of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to include the card of De La Rue into the system of Cunningham since it represents a certain type of financial card that customers might be interested. By including a number of different financial card offers to the customers, Cunningham increases the odds that an appropriate match can be made, which is the ultimate motivation for the invention (Cunningham Abstract).

Cunningham and De La Rue do not specifically disclose that each feature capable of being activated after issuance. Dorf however, teaches a multifunction card system capable of serving as a prepaid phone card, debit card, a loyalty card, and a medical information card. Dorf teaches "V. Intelligent Card™

In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the multifunction card system 108 is capable of providing a single card 101 which is capable of performing all of the foregoing functions. Preferably, the system 108 also allows for the card 101 to be used as an on-line debit card after the cardholder registers with the system. In order to let the system 108 know which function or functions the card 101 is serving in any particular transaction a code is entered into the PIN pad of the POS device from which the transaction is originating."-see col. 10 lines 48-64. It is obvious that the multifunction card taught by Dorf will activate various functions based on a user entering a code into a PIN pad of the POS device after the card has been issued. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cunningham and De La Rue to specifically disclose the activation by the user of various functions (i.e., prepaid phone card, electronic gift certificate card, loyalty card on a multi-function card by entering a code into a PIN pad of a POS device in order to let the system know which function is serving a particular transaction and updating the appropriate databases.

Re Claims 35 and 69: Cunningham discloses a computerized (SEE FIG 1) real time financial card application system

comprising:

- A first activation activating at least one feature of the multi value card (Column 2, lines 9-29; activation is inherent in the acceptance of the offer)
- Allowing the customer to use the multi value card as a card having only said at least one feature (Column 2, lines 24-26). The step of accepting an offer indicates the customers intention to use the features of the cards (i.e. credit or debit feature)
- Wherein prior to activation of any features, the multi-value card contains or is associated with information related to the different features (Abstract "The applicant peruses the offers and chooses one that meets his or her needs." Perusing information associated with the primary card offer.

Cunningham does not explicitly disclose wherein the value card is a multi value card nor does Cunningham disclose the step of offering to the customer a subsequent activation of the multi value card to add at least a second feature or storing information related to each feature on the card in a machine-readable format and wherein at least one feature activated is a non-credit stored value feature. De La Rue discloses a Visa smart card that will place the functions of several traditional bank cards onto a single microchip (single card; machine

readable format). These additional features include a credit feature, a stored cash feature and a rewards program [non-credit stored value feature]. Furthermore De La Rue discloses the step of allowing up to nine different reward programs on the smart card. Specifically noted is that the applications of such programs can be changed to target different cardholders (Page 1; paragraph 3). It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include the teachings of De La Rue to the disclosure of Cunningham to create a real time credit card application system and method that would include a multifunction credit card. It would be obvious then that a customer would have the ability to activate the different features that they desire so that they can have a single transaction card that is capable of performing functions that they deem appropriate.

The newly added limitation is rejected as in claim 1 above.

Re Claim 36: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein said features enable the customer to establish direct relationships with different companies (Entire article, specifically paragraphs 2 and 4)

Re Claim 37: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the

claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein at least one feature offered for activation is a transaction card enabling the customer to establish a direct relationship with an individual company (See paragraph 4; rewards features at particular merchants represent a direct relationship with an individual (particular) company).

Re Claim 38: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and Cunningham further discloses wherein at least one feature offered for activation is a credit card feature (Column 1, lines 15-17).

Re Claim 39: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein at least one feature is a rewards feature (Paragraphs 2 and 4)

Re Claim 40: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing sending the customer a card imprinted with the customers name in a direct mailing marketing piece, Cunningham does disclose the use of direct mailing for transaction cards (Column 1, lines 15-42) and it was notoriously well known, and therefore obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention, to include a preprinted card with the direct mailing information so as to expedite the time in which a customer can actually use the card. Without the preprinted card, the customer would have to

wait for an additional piece of mail containing the physical card with their name.

Re Claims 41, 68: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses the step wherein at least one feature activated during said first activation is a transaction card feature and at least one feature activated in a subsequent activation is a credit card feature (End of Paragraph 1).

Re Claim 42: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein said transaction card feature includes a rewards feature (End of Paragraph 1).

Re Claim 43: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing wherein said rewards are based on a percentage of total amount spent during each transaction, this method for distributing rewards points on a credit card is notoriously well known in the art and would therefore be obvious. In providing this method for distributing rewards points, customers are encouraged to spend more, with the idea that they will "get more back" in return.

Re Claim 44: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein the rewards feature can be redeemed or spent at a specific vendor

(Paragraph 4; see dinner entree example)

Re Claim 45: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein the rewards feature can be redeemed or spent at several vendors (Paragraph 4; "merchants").

Re Claim 46: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein the rewards feature can be redeemed or spent at any vendor or merchant who accepts the logo printed on the transaction card (paragraph 4).

Re Claim 47 and 48: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses wherein the rewards are credited against at least one of the other features of the card (paragraph 4; This essentially defines the rewards feature; purchasing a product with rewards points reduces the secondary credit balance up to the amount of the purchase).

Re Claim 49: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing wherein the customer must agree to establish a credit account with a payment amount source in order to activate the a first feature. De La Rue discusses the combination of a credit, stored value and loyalty functions onto a single smart card (paragraph 1),

which means that these accounts are in fact established with a payment amount source prior to any other use.

Re Claim 50: As previously noted in the rejection of Claim 8, the multi function smart card combines the credit (credit card); stored value (debit card) and loyalty functions onto a single card, which establishes the payment amount sources as these particular cards. While not explicitly disclosing that the payment amount source is a check, it was well known in the art at the time of invention that often times a debit card is linked to a standard checking account, from which paper check can be written, and in a sense a debit card is just an electronic version of a paper check.

Re Claim 51: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing wherein the customer may automatically recharge the primary amount source when the payment source is depleted, this step was well known in the art at the time of invention. It has previously been established that the payment source can be either a debit card or a personal check that are almost always linked to a standard checking account at a particular bank. The step of automatically recharging the amount source when the payment source is depleted is therefore just a simple deposit of money into the account through an automated means such as a automatic

deduction from a paycheck that is normally directly deposited in to the account, a process that was notoriously well known in the art.

Re Claim 52: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing wherein the payment amount source is the secondary credit card feature, it was established in the rejection of claims 10-12 that the payment amount source may be one of a credit card or debit card. De La Rue discloses that the multi purpose card can have a credit / stored value hybrid card, wherein the stored value card acts as the secondary feature. It would therefore be obvious, through the transitive property, that if the debit card can be the payment amount source as the secondary credit feature.

Re Claim 53: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and Cunningham further discloses wherein said activation steps include the use of telephone, Internet, personal computer means or a combination thereof (Column 2, lines 15-17)

Re Claim 54: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing mailing a direct marketing mail piece containing an inactive multi value card and directing the customer to contact the automated activation process center to activate the card, Cunningham does

disclose the use of direct mail marketing (Column 1 lines 15-42), and it was well known in the art at the time of invention that direct mail marketing for credit cards includes an inactive card as well as instructions for activating said card. It therefore would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art to include this feature with the disclosure of Cunningham in view of De La Rue so that the additional steps of mailing an active card to the customer can be eliminated, therefore making the process much more efficient.

Re Claim 55: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing the step of initiating an automatic numbering identification system, this process was old and well known in the art at the time of invention as a way to relate specific customers to a specific transaction card or account. If a numbering identification system were not present, it would be difficult to track customer accounts and also leave customers vulnerable to fraudulent activities from third parties.

Re Claim 56: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and De La Rue further discloses the step wherein said first activation includes offering the customer an option to activate a primary transaction card feature, a credit card feature, an additional feature or combinations thereof

(Paragraphs 1-2).

Re Claim 57: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and while not explicitly disclosing the step of updating the processing and statement account records, this step would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention so as to have an up to date record of customer activities. If the account records were not updated on a regular basis, a customer could, for example exceed his maximum limit.

Re Claim 58: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra and Cunningham further discloses an eligibility check (Column 2, lines 11-15; "meet specific criteria"). While not explicitly disclosing wherein the check is to determine whether or not the card has already been activated and what features if any have already been activated, this step would have been obvious to someone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to prevent redundant offers from being sent to customers. If a customer has already activated a particular feature on the transaction card, it would be a waste of time and money to contact them with offers for that same feature. Furthermore, checking on these features will allow the company to solicit appropriate offers to customers since they will have a record of which features the customer does not have

as well.

Re Claim 59: Cunningham in view of De La Rue discloses the claimed method supra but does not explicitly disclose the step of offering at least one rebuttal offer for activation of a different feature if an offer for activation of a feature is declined by the customer. However, this step would be obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention, so that the company can both inform the customer of all potential features and also maximize their potential revenue. The point of offering multiple features on one card is to claim a larger share of a particular customers financial business. If a company did not provide a counter offer to a customer, should they decline an initial offer, the company could be losing out on revenue from a different feature that the customer would be more inclined to accept.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 35-59, 68-69 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

O' Sullivan, Orla. "Design your own credit card." *American Bankers Association. ABA Banking Journal*, 89(5), 70. (May 1997). Retrieved April 23, 2008, from ABI/INFORM Global database. (Document ID: 12254956).

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elda

Milef whose telephone number is (571)272-8124. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday -Thursday 8:30 am to 4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on (571)272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kambiz Abdi/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit
3692

Elda Milef
Examiner
Art Unit 3692